

he would not get confirmed. But the better part of me and, of course, common sense dictates that the country needs him. For me, to lose him from my staff is really very difficult. He was such an important part of what we have been able to accomplish here in the Senate. He is a really a fine lawyer with a great legal mind. I have worked closely with him for years.

He is going to lead the Justice Department regarding legislative affairs. He has had prosecutorial experience and Government experience. I know and respect all he has done to strengthen our national security, forward the cause of justice, and raise the ethics standards of our Government and in the whole country. In fact, Ron took a lead role in the last Congress, as we passed the most sweeping ethics and lobbying reforms in the history of our Congress and our country.

Those who know and work with Ron value not only his extensive experience but just the person he is. I express my appreciation to Ron Weich for his sound judgment, his collegiality, his honesty, and loyalty to me. Eric Holder will find the same there.

While many of his colleagues from Columbia University and Yale Law School, where he was educated, are out in the private sector making a lot of money, Ron has spent most of his life in public service. He came back to the Senate after having been in a renowned law firm downtown. But he came back because this is what he wants to do. He is able to make enough money to raise his family. He is not interested in how much money he makes. He is interested in what good he can do for our country.

Our Nation benefits immensely when people as good at what they do as Ron is—and as good to others as Ron is—choose to make a difference.

As I have indicated, I am sad to see him leave this Capitol complex. I am comforted by knowing that Ron will play an important role in rebuilding Attorney General Holder's Justice Department to a place where all are once again equal under the law, protected by the law, and no one is above the law.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

#### THANKING THE MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for his kind words. He is a friend of long standing. We came to Washington together in the House of Representatives many years ago, and we certainly never could have dreamed, when we arrived here so many years ago, that today we would be able to work so closely and so well in the leadership of the Senate.

HARRY REID is a terrific leader. He has done an extraordinary job. Today a lot of praise is being given to the President for his first 100 days. I want to add in that chorus of praise HARRY REID, the Senator from Nevada, who has

helped the President achieve the goals that he set out to achieve in the first 100 days. He has made an extraordinary commitment to make that happen, not just in time and effort but in patience dealing with Members of the U.S. Senate.

I thank Senator REID for his earlier comments.

#### CONFIRMATION OF JOSEPH SZABO

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate Mr. Joseph Szabo on his confirmation as the next Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration.

Joe Szabo has made a significant contribution to my State of Illinois, and I believe he is going to bring great success to the Department of Transportation. Joe Szabo understands better than most the long days, unpredictable schedules, and sometimes hazardous working conditions that come with employment in the railroad industry.

He has worked for the railroad—both the Illinois Central and Metra—since he was 18 years old, including stints as yard switchman, road trainman, and commuter passenger conductor.

Five generations of his family worked on the railroad. Joe learned firsthand about the railroads from his father, a 40-year switchman for the Illinois Central Railroad. His father instilled in him a passion for rail work that has helped Joe become a trusted and respected voice in rail labor and in the industry.

Joe has a distinguished record of public service and many accomplishments to show for his work in Illinois. As elected mayor of Riverdale, IL, and State legislative director for the United Transportation Union, UTU, Joe has developed a reputation as a passionate and effective advocate for freight and passenger rail and its workers.

During his tenure as UTU State director, Joe's work was integral to the State of Illinois doubling its investment in passenger rail. This additional State investment Joe worked so hard to achieve allowed Illinois to double the frequency of Amtrak trains leaving Chicago for Quincy, Carbondale, and St. Louis, and to lay the groundwork for expanding service to Rockford and the Quad Cities—our next achievements, I hope soon.

Joe's advocacy helped Illinois passenger rail achieve the fastest growth in ridership and revenue in the entire national Amtrak system.

Joe will now bring his passion for the railroad industry and his experience with rail labor to Washington. As all of us know, President Obama, Vice President BIDEN, and this Congress have made the single largest investment in passenger rail in America's history.

The \$8 billion we included in the stimulus for high-speed passenger rail represents a commitment to taking the next step in intercity passenger rail for the 21st century.

Implementing this vision will be monumental. It will take a good-faith working relationship between Congress, the White House, the industry, and State and local governments.

Thankfully, Joe Szabo has earned the confidence and full support of President Obama. Joe and the President worked closely together when then-State Senator Obama served in Springfield in the Illinois General Assembly.

Mr. President, I am here today to tell you what President Obama and I already know: When it comes to making high-speed rail a reality in the U.S. and ensuring that millions of Americans have access to safe, reliable passenger and freight rail, there is no one better for this job than Joe Szabo.

Mr. President, in the months and years ahead, I can assure you this country will find Joe Szabo understands the critical role our national rail system plays to the health of our economy, our environment, and our future.

I am proud to have added my voice to the chorus of so many who asked the administration to nominate Joe and give him this chance to serve our Nation. I know he is going to do an exceptional job.

#### COMMENDING THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA GYMNASTICS TEAM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 119, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 119) commending the University of Georgia gymnastics team for winning the 2009 NCAA national championship.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 119) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 119

Whereas in 2009, the University of Georgia gymnastics team, the "Gym Dogs", won its 10th National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) women's gymnastics championship;

Whereas the University of Georgia gymnastics program has won 16 Southeastern Conference (SEC) championships;

Whereas the University of Georgia gymnastics program has produced 7 Honda Award winners, with Courtney Kupets under consideration as a finalist for the 2009 award;

Whereas the 2009 national title is the Gym Dogs' 5th consecutive national championship;

Whereas the University of Georgia gymnastics team is the most successful gymnastics program in the Nation;

Whereas the Gym Dogs have made 26 consecutive appearances in the NCAA gymnastics championships;

Whereas the 2009 Gym Dogs's overall record was an amazing 32-1;

Whereas the 2009 Gym Dogs also achieved the highest team GPA at the University of Georgia, 3.36;

Whereas the gymnastics team's coach, Suzanne Yoculan, will retire as the most successful collegiate gymnastics coach in NCAA history; and

Whereas Coach Suzanne Yoculan has, in 19 of her 26 years as head coach at the University of Georgia, taken her squad to an SEC title, an NCAA title, or both: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) commends the University of Georgia gymnastics team for winning the 2009 NCAA women's national championship;

(2) recognizes that the Gym Dogs have won more national championships than any other gymnastics program in the Nation; and

(3) congratulates Suzanne Yoculan for a spectacular career as the University of Georgia's gymnastics coach.

#### CONGRATULATING THE TRINITY COLLEGE BANTAMS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 120 submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 120) congratulating the Trinity College Bantams for their 11th-straight College Squash Association Men's Team Championship.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 120) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

#### S. RES. 120

Whereas, on February 23, 2009, the Trinity College Bantams defeated the Princeton University Tigers, 5 games to 4, in the final match of the College Squash Association Men's Team Championship tournament;

Whereas the Bantams have won 11 national championships in a row;

Whereas the Bantams have won 202 straight matches, the longest winning streak in collegiate sports history;

Whereas junior Baset Chaudry, down 5-0 in the final game with the match tied 4-4, rallied to score 9 straight points and clinch the title for the Bantams;

Whereas seniors Gustav Detter and Manek Mathur, junior Baset Chaudry, sophomore Parth Sharma, and freshman Vikram Malholtra were named to the College Squash Association All-America First Team, and sophomores Randy Lim and Andre Vargas were named to the Second Team;

Whereas, on March 1, 2009, junior Baset Chaudry won the College Squash Association's Men's Individual Championship;

Whereas the diverse roster of the Bantams, which includes players from the United States, India, Jamaica, Pakistan, Sweden, Colombia, and Malaysia, highlights the diversity of Trinity College and the commitment of Trinity College to fostering cultural understanding;

Whereas Coach Paul Assainte has earned acclaim from his players for his role as coach and mentor and for underscoring the values of humility and respect for one's opponents and teammates; and

Whereas each player, coach, and staff member of the Trinity College Bantams demonstrates a strong commitment to the pursuit and achievement of excellence: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the Trinity College Bantams for their historic 11th-straight College Squash Association Men's Team Championship; and

(2) recognizes the achievements of the players, coaches, students, and support staff who were instrumental in the Bantams' victory.

#### DISCHARGE AND REFERRAL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the nomination of John Morton, to be Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security, reported by the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on Monday, April 27, now be referred to the Judiciary Committee for a period of 30 calendar days; that at the end of the 30 days, if the Committee on the Judiciary has not reported the nomination, then it be automatically discharged and placed on the Executive Calendar.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces, on behalf of the majority leader, pursuant to P.L. 110-229, the appointment of the following to be members of the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino: Susan Gonzales of Washington, D.C.; Moctezuma Esparza of California; Carlos Ezeta of Nevada; and Katherine Archuleta of Colorado (non-voting member).

#### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2009

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, April 30; that following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed to have expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and there be a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled

between the two leaders, or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the second half; further, that following morning business, the Senate consider S. 896, the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009, as provided for under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Senators should expect the first vote to occur at or about 2:30 p.m. That vote would be in relation to an amendment I will offer relating to bankruptcy.

We were also able to reach an agreement to consider the nomination of Thomas Strickland to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, with up to 3 hours for debate prior to a vote.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:53 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 30, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

##### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

ANDREW CHARLES WEBER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR NUCLEAR AND CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL DEFENSE PROGRAMS, VICE FREDERICK S. CELEC.

##### DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PETER M. ROGOFF, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATOR, VICE JAMES S. SIMPSON, RESIGNED.

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ERIC P. GOOSBY, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR AT LARGE AND COORDINATOR OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS GLOBALLY.

##### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MARTHA J. KANTER, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, VICE SARA ALICIA TUCKER, RESIGNED.

##### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

KEVIN W. CONCANNON, OF MAINE, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR FOOD, NUTRITION, AND CONSUMER SERVICES, VICE NANCY MONTANEZ-JOHNER, RESIGNED.

##### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

ROBERT M. GROVES, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE CENSUS, VICE STEVEN H. MURDOCK, RESIGNED.

#### CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate, Wednesday, April 29, 2009:

##### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

APRIL S. BOYD, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.

##### DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROBERT S. RIVKIN, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

ROY W. KIENITZ, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION FOR POLICY.

PETER H. APPEL, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

DANA G. GRESHAM, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION.